LOUISIANA BOOKSHELF

"The Louisiana State University Press: 1835-1850; free

By Dr. Irving-Ward Steinman
STEINMAN
Correspondent

The Louisiana State University Press is "fifty" years young. It has a magnificent tradition of excellence. Unsurpassed by any state university press.

An asset of great value to the culture and spiritual growth of the entire state.

The five scholarly directors are: Marcus M. Wilkerson, Donald R. Ellegood, Richard L. Wentworth, Charles East and the director, the famed Leslie E. Phillabaum.

Its publications include scholarly series such as "The Southern Literary Studies," "The Library of Southern Civilization," "The Pegasus Prize for Literature," "The Southern Biography Series," "The Walter Lynwood Fleming Lectures in Southern History," "The Miller Center Series on the American Presidency," "The Political Traditions in Foreign Policy Series," and a number of other important series.

Its a harsh fact that "most people do not have the foggiest notion of what constitutes a university press. Their guess range from the printer of student paper and the football program to the headquarters of the state news association."

The reality is something different. By publishing the results of research of many scholars covering a multitude of subjects, and particularly "The South" the reading public becomes aware of the importance of a university press.

The general run of books published by the LSU Press is not always for the general reader. Many books are the 'meat' of life to specialists "who want others to know" what has been accomplished. The publication of a book by the LSU Press is an expression of deep appreciation for the probing depths of the culture of a people. It reflects the dedication of the handful of scholars who want the public and others to know that the Louisiana State University is a power to conjure with and appreciate. A university press adds prestige and honor to the university it represents.

It was Marcus M. Wilkerson whose brain evoked the establishment of the LSU Press. Fifty years of endeavor is an accomplishment. There are twenty-one staffers plus the director. Each person a dedicated savant to the culture of Louisiana, the South, and to others scattered thruout the literary world.

The LSU Press is a nonprofit organization. The objective is the dispersion of knowledge and the culture that it carries. Some sixty books a year are released by the LSU Press. A magnificent accomplishment. The list of scholars whose works first saw the light of day thru the LSU Press encompass an array without precedent.

In this beautiful book concerning the LSU Press nostalgia enters with pictures of the early home of the press and Alumni Hall. One individual, Mary A. Mitchell, who retired in 1976 is the only former staff member who served under all the five directors. A dedicated achievement with its own merit.

Since 1982 the press has been headquartered in the historic French House on the campus. Photos of the staff appear in this book. The names of the early writers whose genius poured thru the pages of the LSU Press are now world-famous. Early authors included Cleanth Brooks, Jr. (whose father was a Methodist minister), John T. Purser, Robert Penn Warren, Austin Warren, Kenneth Burke, Howard Baker, Arlin Turner, William Van O'Connor, Frederick J. Hoffman and many others.

Peter Taylor, Caroline Gordon, Eudora Welty, Andrew Lytle, Katherine Anne Porter are among the names of writers who continue to ring bells in the literary world. Outstanding authors such as William Faulkner had their works studied in books published by the LSU Press.

Women feature prominently in the works from the LSU Press. That covers the female literary giants: Flannery O'Connor, Muriel Rykeyser, Joyce Carol Oates, Caroline Gordon, Kate Chopin, Ellen Glasgow, and Grace King among others.

LSU Press broke the color line by giving light to Black writers and authors. That important list includes: Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen Richard Wright, Robert Hayden. The South was restored in literary recognition, thanks to the LSU Press.

For further information as no review can due complete justice to the many accomplishments of the LSU Press, their address is: LSU Press, Baton Rouge, LA 70803. Perhaps a request from you will result in a copy of this fabulous history of fifty years in-service to the people of la belle Luzianne and other points of the compass. Selah!